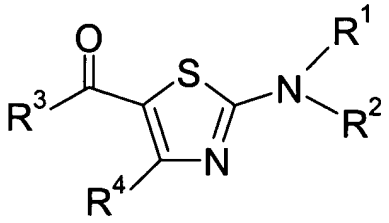
In the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A compound of formula I:



(I)

wherein:

R^1 is aryl or heteroaryl, wherein at least one of the two meta positions of each aryl and heteroaryl group is substituted with R^5;

R^2 is hydrogen, alkyl or cycloalkyl;

R^3 is cycloalkyl or aryl , wherein at least one of the two ortho positions of each cycloalkyl or aryl group is substituted with R^6;

R^4 is hydrogen, alkyl or cycloalkyl;

R^5 is ~~hydrogen,~~ cyano, trifluoromethyl, alkyl-SO_2-, amino-SO_2-, ~~halogen, alkoxy~~, alkylcarbonyl ~~or aminocarbonyl~~; and

R^6 is hydrogen, halogen, cyano, nitro, trifluoromethyl, alkyl, alkoxy, hydroxy or alkoxycarbonyl;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or ester thereof; with the proviso that one of R^5 and R^6 is not hydrogen.

2-8. (Cancelled).

9. (Currently Amended) The compound according to claim ~~8~~1, wherein R^5 is selected from cyano, trifluoromethyl, methyl-SO_2-, NH_2-SO_2- and methylcarbonyl.

10. (Cancelled).

11. (Cancelled).

12. (Previously Presented) The compound according to claim 1 selected from

3-[5-(2-Fluoro-benzoyl)-thiazol-2-ylamino]-benzonitrile;
3-[5-(2-Chloro-benzoyl)-thiazol-2-ylamino]-benzonitrile;
(2-Chloro-phenyl)-[2-(3-trifluoromethyl-phenylamino)-thiazol-5-yl]-methanone;
3-[5-(2-Methyl-benzoyl)-thiazol-2-ylamino]-benzonitrile;
o-Tolyl-[2-(3-trifluoromethyl-phenylamino)-thiazol-5-yl]-methanone;
1-{3-[5-(2-Methyl-benzoyl)-thiazol-2-ylamino]-phenyl}-ethanone;
3-[5-(2-Ethyl-benzoyl)-thiazol-2-ylamino]-benzonitrile;
3-[5-(2-Trifluoromethyl-benzoyl)-thiazol-2-ylamino]-benzonitrile;
[2-(3-Methanesulfonyl-phenylamino)-thiazol-5-yl]-o-tolyl-methanone;
(2-Ethyl-phenyl)-[2-(3-methanesulfonyl-phenylamino)-thiazol-5-yl]-methanone;
4-[5-(2-Ethyl-benzoyl)-thiazol-2-ylamino]-pyridine-2-carbonitrile;
4-[5-(2-Methyl-benzoyl)-thiazol-2-ylamino]-pyridine-2-carbonitrile;
3-[5-(2-Ethyl-benzoyl)-thiazol-2-ylamino]-benzenesulfonamide; and
3-[5-(2-Trifluoromethyl-benzoyl)-thiazol-2-ylamino]-benzenesulfonamide.

13. (Cancelled).

14. (Original) A method for the treatment or prophylaxis of obesity in a patient in need of said treatment, which comprises administering to said patient an effective amount of a compound of claim 1.

15. (Original) The method according to claim 14, wherein said compound is administered orally in an amount of from about 0.1 mg to 20 mg per kg per day.

16. (Currently Amended) ~~The pharmaceutical composition of claim 13~~A pharmaceutical composition, comprising a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to claim 1, a therapeutically inert carrier and ~~further comprising~~ a therapeutically effective amount of orlistat.